

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, PLANNING DIVISION**

**DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/ ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST  
PLAZA DE LA GUERRA INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

**MST2007-00496**

September 2, 2011

This Initial Study has been completed for the project described below because the project is subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and was determined not to be exempt from the requirement for the preparation of an environmental document. The information, analysis and conclusions contained in this Initial Study are the basis for deciding whether a Negative Declaration (ND) is to be prepared or if preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to further analyze impacts. Additionally, if preparation of an EIR is required, the Initial Study is used to focus the EIR on the effects determined to be potentially significant.

**APPLICANT/ PROPERTY OWNER**

Applicant: City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Applicant Representative: Elizabeth Limón, Redevelopment Specialist

Owner: City of Santa Barbara

**PROJECT LOCATION**



Vicinity Map

The proposed project is located on a 2.1 acre parcel located in the Downtown neighborhood of the city of Santa Barbara in the block bounded by Anacapa, De la Guerra, State and Ortega Streets. The parcel includes the City Hall building and parking lot, Plaza de la Guerra, and Storke Placita. Plaza de la Guerra (the Plaza) consists of a raised lawn area, a U- road with parking, and the sidewalks surrounding the U-road. The project area is .47 acres and consists of the Plaza and a portion of De la Guerra Street right-of-way.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** (see *Exhibit A - Project Plans*)

### **Project Components:**

The project includes lowering the grade of the Plaza lawn to be flush with the existing U-road. The width of the lawn area would be reduced by 4.5 feet. The amount of turf would be reduced from 17,332 square feet to 10,748 square feet, with permeable paving replacing a portion of the existing turf. Removable bollards (approximately 18 inches in diameter and 30 inches high) and truncated domes would be installed between the new lawn area and the U-road. The project would involve 2,500 cubic yards of cut and no fill.

The sidewalk on the western side of the Plaza would be widened by approximately 4.5 feet to create a minimum 9 foot wide sidewalk. A new curb would be installed. Because the width of the lawn area was reduced, the width of the U-road would not change.

One new crosswalk would be provided across De la Guerra Street near the U-road entry, and two new crosswalks would be provided near the south end of the U-road. The U-road, all sidewalks within the project area, and the portion of De la Guerra Street fronting the Plaza would be resurfaced with concrete with an historic finish.

There are 13 queen palm trees and one fan palm tree located within the Plaza lawn area. All of the existing queen palm trees would be removed and 22 new queen palm trees would be planted. The one existing fan palm would be protected in place, and one new fan palm tree would be planted. The historic California pepper tree located in front of City Hall would be protected, and a new chain barrier with decorative steel bollards would surround the tree. The plantings located at the north end of the Plaza would be removed.

The California Historical Landmark plaque (rock monument) at north end the Plaza would be relocated to an area adjacent to City Hall, and the three flagpoles would be relocated to the eastern edge of the lawn area. Due to the lowering of the grade, the eight existing streetlights would be removed and relocated slightly.

A new underground utility corridor would be created around the edge of the new Plaza lawn area. The utility corridor trench would be approximately 4 feet in width and 4 feet in depth. Utilities provided would include electrical, gas, water and sewer lines. The existing utilities would be either removed or abandoned in place. The utility connections for booths used during special events would be relocated. An existing electrical panel currently located within the lawn area under a tent, and another electrical panel at the north end of the Plaza would be relocated to the City Hall building. An existing fire hydrant currently located in the lawn area would be relocated to the edge of the lawn area. The Plaza would be regraded to meet the City's requirements for storm water management.

There are currently 35 parking spaces along the U-road, and 23 spaces along De la Guerra Street for a total of 58 parking spaces in the project area. Two existing parking spaces located next to the lawn area across from City Hall would be removed in order to provide adequate road width for emergency vehicles. Three existing parking spaces located at the south end of the U-road would be removed in order to open up the view from Storke Placita to the Plaza, and the remaining parking spaces would be reconfigured. The reconfiguration of parking on De la Guerra Street would result in an increase of one parking space. The proposed project would result in a loss of five (5) parking spaces in the U-road and an increase of one (1) parking space along De la Guerra Street, for a net loss of four (4) parking spaces in the project area.

**Project Operations:** During special events, when the U-road is closed to vehicles, the bollards located between the lawn area and the U-road would be removed to provide more unobstructed space in the Plaza. No change in types or frequency of use for the Plaza is proposed.

**Demolition/Construction:** The total construction period is anticipated to last approximately 4 months, with demolition to last 30 days, grading to last 30 days and construction and landscaping to last 60 days.

### **Required Approvals:**

1. Certification of Environmental Impact Report by Planning Commission.
2. Approval of development in a P-R zone by Parks and Recreation Commission (SBMC Chapter 28.37).
3. Design Review Approval by the Historic Landmarks Commission (SBMC Chapter 22.22).

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

### **Existing Site Characteristics**

**Topography:** The project site is relatively flat, with an approximate slope of 2%, from the northwest to the southeast.

**Flooding/Fire Hazard:** The project site is located inside the Tsunami run-up zone and outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The project site is not located in the City's High Fire Hazard Area.

**Drainage:** The project area slopes gently from the northwest to the southeast. Stormwater runoff is currently captured in a catch basin located at the southerly end of the U-road and routed through a single 12" diameter pipe that discharges to the gutter in Anacapa Street. An overland escape area for storm water from the Plaza is almost non-existent and the potential exists for flooding portions of the Santa Barbara News-Press building during large, infrequent storms.

**Biological Resources:** The California pepper tree located next to City Hall is a specimen tree, and has been designated a historic City Landmark. The project site contains 13 queen palm trees, one fan palm tree, agapanthus and hibiscus plantings, and lawn area. No Federally- or State-protected plant or animal species are present at the site.

**Archaeological Resources:** The project site is located within the Spanish/Mexican Period, Hispanic-American Transition Period (1850-1870), American Period (1870-1900) and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (1900-1920) archaeological resource sensitivity areas, as identified on the City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) Cultural Resources Sensitivity Map.

**Historic Resources:** The City Hall building and California pepper tree were designated City Landmarks in 2000. Directly across De la Guerra Street is Casa de la Guerra. Casa de la Guerra is a City Landmark, California State Landmark, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Noise:** The project site has an average ambient noise level of less than 60 decibels (dBA Ldn 24-hour day/night average).

### **Existing Land Use**

#### **Existing Facilities and Uses:**

Plaza de la Guerra is popular for its high visibility location, and is predominately used for public special events. Storke Placita provides a connection between State Street and Plaza de la Guerra, and is used in conjunction with Plaza de la Guerra for public special events.

#### **Access and Parking:**

Vehicular access to Plaza de la Guerra is from De la Guerra Street. The U-road is one-way with 35 parking spaces, and is not in the public right-of-way. There are 23 parking spaces along De la Guerra Street between State and Anacapa Streets for a total of 58 on-street parking spaces in the project area. There are 75 parking spaces located in the City Hall parking lot. Access to the parking lot is from Anacapa Street.

## **PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS**

|                                  |  |                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Assessor's Parcel Number:</b> | 037-092-037  | <b>General Plan Designation:</b> | Major Public and Institutional        |
| <b>Zoning:</b>                   | P-R (Park and Recreation)/<br>C-2(Commercial)                          | <b>Parcel Size:</b>              | 2.1 acres<br>Project Area: 0.47 acres |
| <b>Existing Land Use:</b>        | Public Plaza   | <b>Proposed Land Use:</b>        | Public Plaza                          |
| <b>Slope:</b>                    | 2%   |                                  |                                       |
| <b>SURROUNDING LAND USES:</b>    |  |                                  |                                       |
| <b>North:</b>                    | Casa de la Guerra, shops, offices                                      |                                  |                                       |
| <b>South:</b>                    | Santa Barbara News-Press Building                                      |                                  |                                       |
| <b>East:</b>                     | City Hall, City Hall parking lot, Santa Barbara News-Press parking lot |                                  |                                       |
| <b>West:</b>                     | Offices, back of shops that front on State Street, Storke Placita      |                                  |                                       |

## **PLANS AND POLICY DISCUSSION**

### **Land Use and Zoning Designations:**

The project site is located in the Downtown Neighborhood, which is bounded on the north by Sola Street; on the south by Ortega Street; on the east by Santa Barbara Street; and on the west by De la Vina Street. The Downtown Neighborhood is the most intensively used part of the City. In addition to its primary function as a viable commercial center, with a balance of retail, office, historical features, restaurants, institutional, financial and cultural arts, there is an increasing number of mixed use and residential land uses. One of the historical amenities in the Downtown Neighborhood is Plaza de la Guerra.

The General Plan Land Use designation for the parcel is Major Public and Institutional. The project would not change the use of the Plaza therefore the project can be found to be consistent with the General Plan Land Use designation.

The Plaza lawn area is zoned P-R (Park and Recreation) and the remainder of the parcel (U-road, sidewalks, City Hall, etc.) is zoned C-2 (Commercial). The Park and Recreation Zone was established in order to protect and preserve publicly owned park and beach lands for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations of residents and visitors. The zone was also established to promote uses of park lands that are compatible with the surrounding land uses and categories within which the respective parks are assigned and to encourage the protection of the City's open space through conservation and appropriate development. Plaza de la Guerra is categorized a Community Park where special, pre-arranged activities and special events and functions occur. Community Parks are specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group from a wide geographic area of the City. The project will remain consistent with the requirements of the P-R zone because no changes in use are proposed. Public parking and paved access areas such as those provided along the U-road are allowed in the C-2 (Commercial) zone portion of the project area. Therefore, the project is also consistent with the requirements of the C-2 zone.

### **Land Use Compatibility:**

Certain land uses have the potential to result in incompatibility with existing surrounding land uses or activities. Typically, development applications for General Plan Amendments, Rezones, Conditional Use Permits, Performance Standard Permits, and certain modifications have the greatest potential to result in land use compatibility issues. Incompatibility can result from a proposed project's generation of noise, odor, safety hazards, traffic, visual effects, or other environmental impacts. This Initial Study provides an analysis of environmental impacts, including land use compatibility, within the primary impact sections (i.e. noise, air quality, etc.). However, in instances where an impact does not rise to a level of significance, land use compatibility concerns may still exist due to certain adverse (less than significant) impacts. Any adverse impacts that raise land use compatibility concerns will require careful evaluation by decision-makers at the time that the proposed project's permit requests are considered.

The proposed use of Plaza is consistent with the existing use therefore operationally the land use would not change significantly. However, construction activities would temporarily affect neighboring land uses in regard to noise, air quality, and traffic. Minor aesthetic changes and historic compatibility are addressed in the following sections, and will be further evaluated in the Historic Landmark Commission's review of the project.

### **General Plan Policies:**

#### **1. Conservation Element**

City Conservation Element policies provide that significant environmental resources of the City be preserved and protected. The Conservation Element requires implementation of resource protection measures for archaeological, historic and architectural resources; protection and enhancement of visual, biological and open space resources; protection of specimen and street trees; maintenance of air and water quality; and minimization of potential drainage, erosion and flooding hazards. The Conservation Element recognizes that while full implementation of the policies would be the most desirable, there are often competing demands for preservation, enhancement, development and conservation.

Additional information is needed in order to determine consistency with land use policies in regard to Cultural Resources. Therefore, this will further evaluated in an EIR.

#### **2. Seismic Safety/Safety Element**

The City's Seismic Safety/Safety Element requires that development be sited, designed and maintained to protect life, property and public well being from seismic and other geologic hazards, and to reduce or avoid adverse economic, social, and environmental impacts caused by hazardous geologic conditions. The Seismic Safety/Safety Element addresses a number of potential hazards including, geology, seismicity, flooding, liquefaction, tsunamis, high groundwater, and erosion. The project site is subject to geologic and environmental constraints. As discussed in Section 5, Geophysical

Conditions, impacts associated with these types of hazards would be less than significant. Therefore, the proposed project could be found consistent with the Seismic Safety/Safety Element.

### 3. Noise Element

The City's Noise Element includes policies intended to achieve and maintain a noise environment that is compatible with the variety of human activities and land uses in the City. The proposed project would not generate a substantial increase in existing ambient noise levels in the area in the long term because the use of the site would remain the same. Short-term construction noise would be minimized through adherence to City Noise Ordinance requirements. Therefore, the proposed project could be found consistent with the Noise Element.

### 4. Circulation Element

The City's Circulation Element contains goals and implementing measures to reduce adverse impacts to the City's street system and parking by reducing reliance on the automobile, encouraging alternative forms of transportation, reviewing traffic impact standards, and applying land use and planning strategies that support the City's mobility goals. Traffic and circulation impacts resulting from the proposed project are potentially less than significant. The net loss of four (4) parking spaces in the project area and the reconfiguration of parking spaces would not significantly affect circulation and would not conflict with any policies of the Circulation Element. Thus the project could be found consistent with the Circulation Element.

However, as stated below, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and parking/circulation at the plaza, the applicant has requested that the project's impacts on circulation be further evaluated in an EIR.

### **MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)**

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will be prepared for the project in compliance with Public Resources Code §21081.6.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST**

The following checklist contains questions concerning potential changes to the environment that may result if this project is implemented. If no impact would occur, **NO** should be checked. If the project might result in an impact, check **YES** indicating the potential level of significance as follows:

**Significant:** Known substantial environmental impacts. Further review needed to determine if there are feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives to reduce the impact.

**Potentially Significant:** Unknown, potentially significant impacts that need further review to determine significance level and whether mitigable.

**Potentially Significant, Mitigable:** Potentially significant impacts that can be avoided or reduced to less than significant levels with identified mitigation measures agreed-to by the applicant.

**Less Than Significant:** Impacts that are not substantial or significant.

| 1. AESTHETICS<br>Could the project:  | NO | YES<br><i>Level of Significance</i> |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?  |    | Less Than Significant               |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a state scenic highway? | X  |                                     |
| c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?  |    | Less Than Significant               |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare?  | X  |                                     |

### **Visual Aesthetics - Discussion**

**Issues:** Issues associated with visual aesthetics include the potential blockage of important public scenic views, project on-site visual aesthetics and compatibility with the surrounding area, and changes in exterior lighting.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Aesthetic quality, whether a project is visually pleasing or unpleasing, may be perceived and valued differently from one person to the next, and depends in part on the context of the environment in which a project is proposed. The significance of visual changes is assessed qualitatively based on consideration of the proposed physical change and project design within the context of the surrounding visual setting. First, the existing visual setting is reviewed to determine whether important existing visual aesthetics are involved, based on consideration of existing views, existing visual aesthetics on and around the site, and existing lighting conditions. Under CEQA, the evaluation of a project's potential impacts to scenic views is focused on views from public (as opposed to private) viewpoints. The importance of existing views is assessed qualitatively based on whether important visual resources such as mountains, skyline trees, or the coastline, can be seen, the extent and scenic quality of the views, and whether the views are experienced from public viewpoints. The visual changes associated with the project are then assessed qualitatively to determine whether the project would result in substantial effects associated with important public scenic views, on-site visual aesthetics, and lighting.

Significant visual aesthetics impacts may potentially result from:

- Substantial obstruction or degradation of important public scenic views, extensive grading and/or removal of substantial amounts of vegetation and trees visible from public areas without adequate landscaping; or substantial loss of important public open space.
- Substantially damage scenic resources within a scenic highway (Highway 154; Highway 101; Cabrillo Blvd between Highway 101 and Castillo Street; Sycamore Canyon Road (144)/Stanwood Drive(192)/Mission Ridge Road (192)/Mountain Drive to the Old Mission on Los Olivos Street; or Shoreline Drive from Castillo Street to the end of Shoreline Park.)
- Substantial negative aesthetic effect or incompatibility with surrounding land uses or structures due to project size, massing, scale, density, architecture, signage, or other design features.
- Substantial light and/or glare that poses a hazard or substantial annoyance to adjacent land uses and sensitive receptors.

### **Visual Aesthetics – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

#### **1.a) and b) Scenic Views and Scenic Highways**

The City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) maps do not identify the project site as being located in an area of visual sensitivity; however, the Plaza itself is a space that is enjoyed by the public and viewed from the public right-of-way. The changes would not result in an obstruction of views to or from the Plaza, would not include extensive grading, and would not result in loss of public open space. All trees to be removed will be replaced. There would be no change in the existing views of the surrounding area, including views of City Hall and Case de la Guerra. Therefore, the project's impacts to scenic views would be *less than significant*.

The project site is not located on or visible from a designated scenic highway. Therefore, there would be no impacts to a scenic highway.

### 1.c) Aesthetics

The Plaza will remain similar in character. The changes to the Plaza will maintain the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings. Therefore, the project's aesthetics impacts would be less than significant.

The project is generally consistent with the El Pueblo Viejo (EPV) Design Guidelines. The project was reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on August 17, 2011. The majority of the Commission supported the widening of the sidewalk. Concerns were expressed regarding the elimination of the interior curb, relocation of the flag poles and monument, and the paving layout of the lawn area. Some Commissioners suggested that the parking spaces adjacent to the lawn area be eliminated. The proposed project requires Project Design Approval and Final approval by the HLC for consistency with EPV design guidelines for views, visual aesthetics and compatibility, and lighting.

### 1.d) Lighting/Glare

The proposed project includes the relocation of the existing eight streetlights due to site grading. The streetlights would be in substantially the same location, and no new lighting is proposed. The existing streetlights are in compliance with the City Streetlight Map, which designates this area as requiring State Street style fixtures. The State Street style fixtures are in compliance with the requirements of SBMC Chapter 22.75, the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. The ordinance provides that exterior lighting be shielded and directed to the site such that no undue lighting or glare would affect surrounding residents or roads. Compliance with this ordinance as well as review and approval of the lighting plan by the HLC will ensure that the proposed exterior lighting does not result in a significant impact. Therefore, there would be no impacts on lighting and glare.

### Visual Aesthetics - Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

### Visual Aesthetics - Residual Impacts

Less than significant.

| 2. AIR QUALITY     |  | NO | YES                          |
|--------------------|--|----|------------------------------|
| Could the project: |  |    | <i>Level of Significance</i> |
| a)                 | Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?   |    | Less Than Significant        |
| b)                 | Exceed any air quality emission threshold?   |    | Less Than Significant        |
| c)                 | Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is designated in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? |    | Less Than Significant        |
| d)                 | Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutants?  |    | Less Than Significant        |
| e)                 | Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?   |    | Less Than Significant        |
| f)                 | Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?   |    | Less Than Significant        |
| g)                 | Create objectionable odors?  |    | Less Than Significant        |

## **Air Quality - Discussion**

**Issues.** Air quality issues involve pollutant emissions from vehicle exhaust, stationary sources (i.e. gas stations, boilers, diesel generators, dry cleaners, oil and gas processing facilities, etc), and minor stationary sources called “area sources” (i.e. residential heating and cooling, fireplaces, etc.) that contribute to smog, particulates and nuisance dust associated with grading and construction processes, and nuisance odors. Stationary sources of air emissions are of particular concern to sensitive receptors, as is construction dust and particulate matter. Sensitive receptors are defined as children, elderly, or ill people that can be more adversely affected by air quality emissions. Land uses typically associated with sensitive receptors include schools, parks, playgrounds, childcare centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, hospitals, and clinics.

Smog, or ozone, is formed in the atmosphere through a series of photochemical reactions involving interaction of oxides of nitrogen [NO<sub>x</sub>] and reactive organic compounds [ROC] (referred to as ozone precursors) with sunlight over a period of several hours. Primary sources of ozone precursors in the South Coast area are vehicle emissions. Sources of particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) include demolition, grading, road dust, agricultural tilling, mineral quarries, and vehicle exhaust.

The City of Santa Barbara is part of the South Coast Air Basin. The City is subject to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS), which are more stringent than the national standards. The CAAQS apply to six pollutants: photochemical ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and lead. The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (SBCAPCD) provides oversight on compliance with air quality standards and preparation of the County Clean Air Plan.

Santa Barbara County is considered in attainment of the federal eight-hour ozone standard, and in attainment of the state one-hour ozone standard. The County does not meet the state eight-hour ozone standard or the state standard for particulate matter less than ten microns in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>); but does meet the federal PM<sub>10</sub> standard. The County is in attainment for the federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard and unclassified for the state PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard.

The APCD has also issued several notifications and requirements regarding toxic air emissions generated from activities such as gasoline dispensing, dry cleaning, freeways, manufacturing, etc., that may require projects with these components to mitigate or redesign features of the project to avoid excessive health risks. Additionally, APCD requires submittal of an asbestos notification form for each regulated structure that is proposed to be demolished or renovated.

Global Climate Change (GCC) is a change in the average weather of the earth that can be measured by changes in wind patterns, storms, precipitation and temperature. Although there is not unanimous agreement regarding the occurrence, causes, or effects of GCC, there is a substantial body of evidence that climate change is occurring due the introduction of gases that trap heat in the atmosphere. Common greenhouse gases (GHG) include water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxides, chlorofluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, ozone and aerosols. Natural processes emit GHG that help to regulate the earth’s temperature; however, it is believed that substantial increases in emissions from human activities, such as electricity production and vehicle use, have substantially elevated the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere beyond the level of naturally occurring concentrations. While other greenhouse gases have higher global warming potential, carbon dioxide is emitted in such vastly higher quantities that it accounts for 85 percent (in terms of carbon dioxide equivalent) of all greenhouse gas emissions by the United States. Greenhouse gas emissions are typically measured in terms of mass carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which is the product of the mass of a particular greenhouse gas and its specific global warming potential (CO<sub>2</sub> has a global warming potential of 1).

California is a substantial contributor of GHG (2nd largest contributor in the U.S. and the 16th largest contributor in the world); with transportation and electricity generation representing the two largest contributing factors (41 and 22 percent, respectively). Assembly Bill 32 created the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 that requires the California Air Resources Board to adopt regulations to evaluate statewide greenhouse gas emissions, and then create a program and emission caps to limit statewide emissions to 1990 levels. California State Senate Bill 97, enacted in 2007, required that the CEQA Guidelines be amended to include “guidance for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emission or the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.” The California Office of Planning and Research developed amendments to the CEQA Guidelines which were adopted by the California Natural Resources Agency on December 30, 2009 and became effective March 18, 2010. These amendments established a general framework for addressing global climate change impacts in the CEQA process. A number of state and regional agencies within California are working to develop procedures to evaluate climate change impacts in CEQA documents and to determine whether those impacts are significant. While these standards are being developed for Santa Barbara County, APCD recommends that CEQA documents include: 1) a discussion of a project’s impacts to and from global climate change; 2) a quantification of greenhouse gas emissions from all project sources; and 3) a discussion of how climate change impacts have been mitigated to the extent reasonably possible for each project.



**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** A project may create a significant air quality impact from the following:

- Exceeding an APCD pollutant threshold; inconsistency with District regulations; or exceeding population forecasts in the adopted County Clean Air Plan.
- Exposing sensitive receptors, such as children, the elderly or sick people to substantial pollutant exposure.
- Substantial unmitigated nuisance dust during earthwork or construction operations.
- Creation of nuisance odors inconsistent with APCD regulations.

**Long-Term (Operational) Impact Guidelines:** The City of Santa Barbara uses the SBCAPCD thresholds of significance for evaluating air quality impacts. The APCD has determined that a proposed project will not have a significant air quality impact on the environment if operation of the project will:

- Emit (from all project sources, both stationary and mobile) less than 240 pounds per day for ROC and NO<sub>x</sub>, and 80 pounds per day for PM<sub>10</sub>;
- Emit less than 25 pounds per day of ROC or NO<sub>x</sub> from motor vehicle trips only;
- Not cause a violation of any California or National Ambient Air Quality Standard (except ozone);
- Not exceed the APCD health risks public notification thresholds adopted by the APCD Board; and
- Be consistent with the adopted federal and state air quality plans for Santa Barbara.

Substantial long-term project emissions could potentially stem from stationary sources which may require permits from the APCD and from motor vehicles associated with the project and from mobile sources. Examples of stationary emission sources that require permits from APCD include gas stations, auto body shops, diesel generators, boilers and large water heaters, dry cleaners, oil and gas production and processing facilities, and wastewater treatment facilities.

**Short-Term (Construction) Impacts Guidelines:** Projects involving grading, paving, construction, and landscaping activities may cause localized nuisance dust impacts and increased particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). Substantial dust-related impacts may be potentially significant, but are generally considered mitigable with the application of standard dust control mitigation measures. Standard dust mitigation measures are applied to projects with either significant or less than significant effects.

Exhaust from construction equipment also contributes to air pollution. Quantitative thresholds of significance are not currently in place for short-term or construction emissions. However, SBCAPCD uses combined emissions from all construction equipment that exceed 25 tons of any pollutant except carbon monoxide within a 12-month period as a guideline threshold for determining significance of construction emission impacts.

**Cumulative Impacts and Consistency with Clean Air Plan:** If the project-specific impact exceeds the ozone precursor significance threshold, it is also considered to have a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts. When a project is not accounted for in the most recent Clean Air Plan growth projections, then the project's impact may also be considered to have a considerable contribution to cumulative air quality impacts. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and Air Resources Board on-road emissions forecasts are used as a basis for vehicle emission forecasting. If a project provides for increased population growth beyond that forecasted in the most recently adopted CAP, or if the project does not incorporate appropriate air quality mitigation and control measures, or is inconsistent with APCD rules and regulations, then the project may be found inconsistent with the CAP and may have a significant impact on air quality.

**Global Climate Change:** According to recent amendments to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project would have significant impacts related to greenhouse gas emission if it would generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment or conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. A number of state and regional agencies within California are currently working to develop procedures to determine specifically how this significance determination should be interpreted and to develop plans and policies for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In the meantime, projects should be designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent reasonably possible.

Additionally, as an interim measure, APCD and other local jurisdictions including Santa Barbara County are temporarily using greenhouse gas emissions thresholds adopted in June 2010 by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The BAAQMD thresholds are the most recently-adopted thresholds currently in use in California. A detailed explanation from the County of Santa Barbara as to why the BAAQMND analysis and thresholds are appropriate

for land use projects in Santa Barbara County is attached (see *Exhibit B - SB County GHG Emissions Standards*). APCD staff have also indicated that given that the BAAQMD's adopted thresholds provide the most current significance criteria available at this time, they are appropriate as interim thresholds of significance for use by other jurisdictions until more specific local thresholds are developed. Consistent with the BAAQMD's guidance, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts to GHG emissions and climate change would be cumulatively considerable if the project would produce in excess of 1,100 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>E/year.

## **Air Quality – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

### **2.a) Clean Air Plan**

The proposed project consists primarily of the lowering of the grade of the lawn area and the widening of sidewalks. No housing units are proposed. Direct and indirect emissions associated with the project are accounted for in the 2010 Clean Air Plan emissions growth assumptions. Appropriate air quality mitigation measures, including construction dust suppression, would be applied to the project, consistent with CAP and City policies, and are identified herein as recommended mitigation measures. The project could be found consistent with the 2010 Clean Air Plan; therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

### **b-f) Air Pollutant Emissions, Sensitive Receptors, and Cumulative Impacts**

#### **Long-Term (Area Source & Operational) Emissions:**

As proposed, the project area would continue as a public Plaza, with all of the uses and vehicle trips associated with this type of development. The project would not include stationary sources. Utilizing the CAPCD Screening Table contained in the APCD document entitled "Scope and Content of Air Quality Section in Environmental Documents," the project is not proposing a type of development that would likely exceed the threshold of significance for ROC and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions of 240 pounds per day of ROC or NO<sub>x</sub>. Consistent with APCD guidance, this indicates that the project is also highly unlikely to exceed the APCD threshold of 80 pounds per day of PM<sub>10</sub> as well. Therefore, the proposed project is anticipated to have a less than significant effect on long term air quality.

#### **Short-Term (Construction) Emissions:**

Construction of the proposed project could result in emissions of pollutants due to grading, fumes, and vehicle exhaust. There are no sensitive receptors located adjacent to the project site that could be affected by dust and particulates during project site grading and vehicle exhaust from construction equipment.

The project would involve grading, paving, and landscaping activities which could cause localized dust related impacts resulting in increases in particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>). APCD recommends standard dust control measures for any discretionary project involving earth-moving activities. Dust-related impacts to sensitive receptors would be less than significant, and would be further reduced with implementation of the recommended mitigation measures identified below.

Diesel and gasoline powered construction equipment also emit particulate matter, NO<sub>x</sub>, and ROC. While APCD only has thresholds related to construction of stationary sources, APCD recommends quantifying emissions from construction equipment if the project exceeds the APCD Screening Table for operations to see if emissions from all construction equipment would need to exceed 25 tons of any pollutant (except carbon monoxide) within a 12-month period. In this case, the project does not involve construction of a stationary source and does not exceed APCD Screening Table for operations. Therefore, the proposed project is anticipated to have a less than significant impact. However, the SBCAPCD recommends measures for limiting vehicle exhaust, which are identified below as recommended mitigation measures.

#### **Global Climate Change:**

Sources of carbon dioxide emissions that could result from the project include project-related traffic, natural gas use, landscape maintenance, consumer product use, solid waste generations, site lighting, and potable water delivery. However these uses already exist on the site and the proposed project would result in minimal change to the long term emissions of carbon dioxide. Construction emissions would be limited to the construction period and would be reduced through construction equipment emission control measures required as standard conditions of approval and shown below as recommended mitigation measures. Further the project does not exceed any other air quality standard for operations or construction. Further, the project falls significantly below development levels outlined in the BAAQMD Screening Table for Greenhouse Gas Impacts that describes types of development unlikely to generate more than 1,100 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>E/year. This is BAAQMD's quantitative threshold for impacts related to GHG emissions that is being used by Santa Barbara County and other local jurisdictions as an interim threshold of significance until one is developed regionally or at

the State level. The project would, therefore, not result in substantial greenhouse gas emissions or impede the ability of the State to attain greenhouse gas reduction goals and impacts would be considered less than significant.

## **2.g) Odors**

The use of the project area would not change. Plaza de la Guerra is often used for public special events, which may include activities involving odors or smoke from commercial cooking equipment. The proposed project would not result in an increase in these activities. Current City requirements that regulate these uses are in place. Due to the nature of the proposed land use and limited size of the project, project impacts related to odors would be considered less than significant.

### **Air Quality – Recommended Mitigations**

- AQ-1 Construction Dust Control - Watering.** During site grading and transportation of fill materials, regular water sprinkling shall occur using reclaimed water whenever the Public Works Director determines that it is reasonably available. During clearing, grading, earth moving or excavation, sufficient quantities of water, through use of either water trucks or sprinkler systems, shall be applied to achieve minimum soil moisture of 12% to prevent dust from leaving the site. Each day, after construction activities cease, the entire area of disturbed soil shall be sufficiently moistened to create a crust. Throughout construction, water trucks or sprinkler systems shall also be used to keep all areas of vehicle movement damp enough to prevent dust raised from leaving the site. At a minimum, this will include wetting down such areas every three hours. Increased watering frequency will be required whenever the wind speed exceeds 15 mph.
- AQ-2 Construction Dust Control – Tarping.** Trucks transporting fill material to and from the site shall be covered from the point of origin and maintain a freeboard height of 12 inches.
- AQ-3 Construction Dust Control – Gravel Pads.** Gravel pads shall be installed to reduce mud/dirt track out from unpaved truck exit routes.
- AQ-4 Construction Dust Control – Minimize Disturbed Area/Speed.** Minimize amount of disturbed area and reduce on site vehicle speeds to 15 miles per hour or less.
- AQ-5 Construction Dust Control – Disturbed Area Treatment.** After clearing, grading, earth moving, excavation, or demolition is completed, the entire area of disturbed soil shall be treated to prevent wind erosion. This may be accomplished by:
- a. Seeding and watering until grass cover is grown;
  - b. Spreading soil binders;
  - c. Sufficiently wetting the area down to form a crust on the surface with repeated soakings as necessary to maintain the crust and prevent dust pickup by the wind;
  - d. Other methods approved in advance by the Air Pollution Control District.
- AQ-6 Construction Dust Control – Surfacing.** All surfaces for roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc., shall be laid as soon as possible. Additionally, building pads shall be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- AQ-7 Stockpiling.** If importation, exportation and stockpiling of fill material are involved, soil stockpiled for more than two days shall be covered, kept moist by applying water at a rate of 1.4 gallons per hour per square yard, or treated with soil binders to prevent dust generation. Apply cover when wind events are declared.
- AQ-8 Construction Dust Control – Project Environmental Coordinator (PEC).** The contractor or builder shall designate a person or persons to monitor the dust control program and to order increased watering, as necessary, to prevent transport of dust offsite. Their duties shall include holiday and weekend periods when construction work may not be in progress. The name and telephone number of such persons shall be provided to the Air Pollution Control District prior to land use clearance for map recordation and land use clearance for finish grading for the structure.
- AQ-9 Engine Size.** The engine size of construction equipment shall be the minimum practical size.
- AQ-10 Equipment Numbers.** The number of construction equipment operating simultaneously shall be minimized through efficient management practices to ensure that the smallest practical number is operating at any one time.
- AQ-11 Equipment Maintenance.** Construction equipment shall be maintained to meet the manufacturer's specifications.

**AQ-12 Catalytic Converters.** Catalytic converters shall be installed on gasoline-powered equipment, if feasible.

**AQ-13 Diesel Catalytic Converters.** Diesel catalytic converters, diesel oxidation catalysts and diesel particulate filters as certified and/or verified by EPA or California shall be installed, if available.

**AQ-14 Diesel Replacements.** Diesel powered equipment shall be replaced by electric equipment whenever feasible.

**AQ-15 Idling Limitation.** All commercial diesel vehicles are subject to Title 13, Section 2485 and 2449 of the California Code of Regulations, limiting engine idling times. Idling of heavy-duty diesel trucks and diesel fueled or alternative diesel fueled off-road compression ignition vehicle during loading and unloading shall be limited to five minutes; auxiliary power units shall be used whenever possible.

**AQ-16 Worker Trips.** Construction worker trips shall be minimized by requiring carpooling and by providing for lunch onsite.

**AQ-17 Portable diesel equipment** - All portable diesel-powered construction equipment shall be registered with the state's portable equipment registration program or shall obtain an APCD permit.

**AQ-18 Mobile construction equipment** - Fleet owners of mobile construction equipment are subject to the California Air Resource Board (CARB) Regulation for In-use Off-road Diesel Vehicles (Title 13 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 9, Section 2449), the purpose of which is to reduce diesel particulate matter (PM) and criteria pollutant emission from in-use (existing) off-road diesel-fueled vehicles. The current requirements include idling limits of 5 minutes, labeling of vehicles with ARB-issued equipment identification numbers, reporting to ARB, and vehicle sales disclosures. For more information, please refer to the CARB website at [www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/ordiesel/ordiesel.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/ordiesel/ordiesel.htm)

### **Air Quality - Residual Impacts**

Less Than Significant.

| <b>3. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>          |  | <b>NO</b> | <b>YES</b>                         |
|---|--|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Could the project result in impacts to: |  |           | <i>Level of Significance</i>       |
| a)                                      | Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including but not limited to plants, fish, insects, animals, and birds)? | X         |                                    |
| b)                                      | Locally designated historic, Landmark or specimen trees?   |           | Potentially Significant, Mitigable |
| c)                                      | Natural communities (e.g. oak woodland, coastal habitat, etc.).  | X         |                                    |
| d)                                      | Wetland habitat (e.g. marsh, riparian, and vernal pool)?   | X         |                                    |
| e)                                      | Wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?   |           | Less Than Significant              |

### **Biological Resources - Discussion**

**Issues:** Biological resources issues involve the potential for a project to substantially affect biologically-important natural vegetation and wildlife, particularly species that are protected as rare, threatened, or endangered by federal or state wildlife agencies and their habitat, native specimen trees, and designated landmark or historic trees.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Existing native wildlife and vegetation on a project site are qualitatively assessed to identify whether they constitute important biological resources, based on the types, amounts, and quality of the resources within the context of the larger ecological community. If important biological resources exist, project effects to the resources are qualitatively evaluated to determine whether the project would substantially affect these important biological resources. Significant biological resource impacts may potentially result from substantial disturbance to important wildlife and vegetation in the following ways:

- Elimination or substantial reduction or disruption of important natural vegetative communities and wildlife habitat or migration corridors, such as oak woodland, coastal strand, riparian, and wetlands.

- Substantial effect on protected plant or animal species listed or otherwise identified or protected as endangered, threatened or rare.
- Substantial loss or damage to important native specimen trees or designated landmark or historic trees.

## **Biological Resources – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

### **3.a) Endangered, Threatened, Rare Species or their Habitats**

The City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) maps of the project site do not identify the project site as having habitat for currently listed or candidate endangered, threatened or rare species. Given the project site's urban location, lack of natural vegetation and existing disturbance of the natural environment, the potential to find such species on site is very low. Therefore, the project would have no impact on endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats.

### **3.b) Historic, Landmark or Specimen Trees**

Mature native and non-native specimen trees provide numerous benefits to the environment, including shade, soil stability, air quality, and localized habitat for urban-adapted wildlife species, such as birds. City policies address the protection and replacement of mature trees.

The California pepper tree located in front of City Hall was designated a City Landmark in April of 2000. The historic tree would be protected during construction and a new chain with decorative steel bollards would surround the tree.

A Tree Assessment Memo prepared by Timothy Downey, City Urban Forest Superintendent, dated April 2010 is summarized herein and incorporated by reference (see *Exhibit C - Tree Assessment*). The report assessed the trees within the project area. The report concluded that the condition of the existing 13 queen palm trees is not ideal and that relocation of the trees is not recommended. The report also stated that the California fan palm tree, whose trunk is in good condition, should be protected by maintaining the original grade around the tree for a distance of ten feet. There are other existing trees adjacent to the project site that may be impacted during construction. Recommended measures to protect the California pepper tree and other existing trees have been included as mitigation measures. The impacts to the California pepper tree, a City Landmark, would be potentially significant, mitigable. The impacts to the other existing trees would be less than significant. With the implementation of the mitigation measures during construction activities, the impacts to the California pepper tree would be reduced to less than significant levels.

### **3.c) Natural Communities**

The City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) maps of the project site do not identify the project site as containing any natural communities (e.g. oak woodland, coastal habitat, etc.). Therefore, the project would have no impact on natural communities.

### **3.d) Wetland Habitat**

The City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) maps of the project site do not identify the project site as containing wetland habitat. Therefore, the project would have no impact on wetland habitat.

### **3.e) Wildlife Dispersal or Migration Corridors**

The project site is located in an urban area surrounding by development. No migratory species are expected on the site, and no non-urbanized wildlife would be displaced as a result of the project. Therefore, the impacts to wildlife dispersal and migration corridors would be less than significant.

All of the existing palm trees would be removed and replaced. Palm trees may provide nesting sites for migratory birds or raptors; however, due to the surrounding urban environment, migratory birds are unlikely to be directly harmed on the project site. Nevertheless, the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) protects all migratory non-game native bird species, and the applicant must comply with this Act. As a standard practice, the City inspects trees for nesting birds prior to any tree removal by the City. Compliance with these standard practices and the requirements of the MBTA would ensure that the impact on migratory birds is less than significant.

## **Biological Resources – Required Mitigation**

**BIO -1 California Pepper Tree Protection Measures.** The landscape plan and grading plan shall include the following tree protection measures, intended to minimize impacts on trees:

- a. The tree shall be protected during construction by only hand digging in the critical root zone (CRZ) and preserving any existing roots in the area of construction.

- b. The CRZ should be a minimum of three feet outside the dripline of the tree.
- c. The substrate under the road shall be changed to improve the likelihood this tree will continue to live, and enhance the rooting zone.
- d. Compaction under the tree during construction shall be minimized as much as possible.
- e. Certified Arborist shall inspect tree before, during and after development.

#### **BIO -2 Tree Protection Measures.**

- a. **California Fan Palm.** The original grade shall be maintained around the existing fan palm by either not grading within 10 feet of the tree or the tree shall be in a 10 foot wide planter with the original grade.
- b. **Other Trees.** All existing trees to remain shall have fencing placed around the tree's critical root zone (CRZ) during construction. For the existing palm trees, the fence shall be a minimum of six feet away from the trunk. No equipment or materials shall be allowed in the CRZ. No mechanical digging shall occur in the CRZ.

#### **Biological Resources - Residual Impacts**

Less than significant.

| <b>4. CULTURAL RESOURCES</b> |   | <b>NO</b> | <b>YES</b>   |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|--|
| Could the project:           |   |           | <i>Level of Significance</i>                             |
| a)                           | Disturb archaeological resources?   |           | Potentially Significant                                  |
| b)                           | Affect a historic structure or site designated or eligible for designation as a National, State or City landmark?                       |           | Less Than Significant (to be examined further in an EIR) |
| c)                           | Have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect ethnic cultural values or restrict religious uses in the project area? |           | Less Than Significant (to be examined further in an EIR) |

#### **Cultural Resources - Discussion**

**Issues:** Archaeological resources are subsurface deposits dating from Prehistoric or Historical time periods. Native American culture appeared along the channel coast over 10,000 years ago, and numerous villages of the Barbareno Chumash flourished in coastal plains now encompassed by the City. Spanish explorers and eventual settlements in Santa Barbara occurred in the 1500's through 1700's. In the mid-1800's, the City began its transition from Mexican village to American city, and in the late 1800's through early 1900's experienced intensive urbanization. Historic resources are above-ground structures and sites from historical time periods with historic, architectural, or other cultural importance. The City's built environment has a rich cultural heritage with a variety of architectural styles, including the Spanish Colonial Revival style emphasized in the rebuilding of Santa Barbara's downtown following a destructive 1925 earthquake.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Archaeological and historical impacts are evaluated qualitatively by archeologists and historians. First, existing conditions on a site are assessed to identify whether important or unique archaeological or historical resources exist, based on criteria specified in the State CEQA *Guidelines* and City Master Environmental Assessment *Guidelines for Archaeological Resources and Historical Structures and Sites*, summarized as follows:

- Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and there exists a demonstrable public interest in that information.
- Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
- Is directly associated with an important prehistoric or historic event or person.

If important archaeological or historic resources exist on the site, project changes are evaluated to determine whether they would substantially affect these important resources.

## **Cultural Resources – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

### **4.a) Archaeological Resources**

The project site is located within the Spanish/Mexican Period, Hispanic-American Transition Period (1850-1870), American Period (1870-1900) and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (1900-1920) archaeological resource sensitivity areas, as identified on the City's Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) Cultural Resources Sensitivity Map. A Phase I Archaeological Resources Report (ARR) prepared by Applied Earthworks dated July 2011 was accepted by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on August 17, 2011. The report is on file with the City of Santa Barbara for decision makers and qualified personnel to review.

The report states that the project requires surface grading and deep excavations that have the potential to impact archaeological deposits and localized deposits that have been shown to yield information important in prehistory and history. The report recommends the preparation of a Phase 2 ARR and a Phase 3 ARR (data recovery plan). Therefore, the project's impacts on archaeological resources would be potentially significant. A Phase 2 ARR and Phase 3 ARR (data recovery plan) will be prepared as part of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### **4.b) and c) Historic Resources and Ethnic/Religious Resources**

A Historic Structures/Sites Report and Cultural Landscape Report prepared by Post/Hazeltine Associates dated August 2, 2011 is summarized herein and incorporated by reference (see ***Exhibit D - Historic Structures/Sites Report and Cultural Landscape Report***). The report determined that Plaza de la Guerra is listed in the California Register of Historical Resources, and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a significant Cultural Landscape. It is currently listed on the City's Potential Historic Structures/Sites List and is eligible for listing as a City of Santa Barbara Landmark. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation were applied to the proposed project to determine if the project has the potential for significantly impacting historic resources. The analysis has determined that the proposed project would meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and therefore, the impacts to historic resources would be less than significant. However, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and the historic nature of the plaza, as well as the connection in this case between archaeological resources and historic structures, the applicant has requested that the project's impacts on historic resources be further evaluated in an EIR.

The report was accepted by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on August 17, 2011. The report contains recommendations for construction that may be refined based on archaeological recovery efforts. These will be analyzed and discussed in an EIR.

The California pepper tree, located adjacent to City Hall, is a City Landmark. The historic tree is discussed in the Biology section above. Mitigation measures are proposed to protect the tree during construction activities.

## **Cultural Resources – Required Mitigation**

Will be further evaluated in an EIR.

## **Cultural Resources – Residual Impacts**

Will be further evaluated in an EIR.

| <b>5. GEOPHYSICAL CONDITIONS</b>                 |   | <b>NO</b> | <b>YES</b>                          |
|--|---|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Could the project result in or expose people to: |   |           | <b><i>Level of Significance</i></b> |
| a)   | Seismicity: fault rupture?                                |           | Less Than Significant               |
| b)   | Seismicity: ground shaking or liquefaction?               |           | Less Than Significant               |
| c)   | Seismicity: seiche or tsunami?                            |           | Less Than Significant               |
| d)   | Landslides or mudslides?                                  | X         |                                     |
| e)   | Subsidence of the land?                                   | X         |                                     |
| f)   | Expansive soils?  |           | Less Than Significant               |
| g)   | Excessive grading or permanent changes in the topography? |           | Less Than Significant               |

### **Geophysical Conditions - Discussion**

**Issues:** Geophysical impacts involve geologic and soil conditions and their potential to create physical hazards affecting persons or property; or substantial changes to the physical condition of the site. Included are earthquake-related conditions such as fault rupture, groundshaking, liquefaction (a condition in which saturated soil loses shear strength during earthquake shaking); or seismic sea waves; unstable soil or slope conditions, such as landslides, subsidence, expansive or compressible/collapsible soils; or erosion; and extensive grading or topographic changes.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Potentially significant geophysical impacts may result from:

- Exposure to or creation of unstable earth conditions due to seismic conditions, such as earthquake faulting, groundshaking, liquefaction, or seismic waves.
- Exposure to or creation of unstable earth conditions due to geologic or soil conditions, such as landslides, settlement, or expansive, collapsible/compressible, or expansive soils.
- Extensive grading on slopes exceeding 20%, substantial topographic change, destruction of unique physical features; substantial erosion of soils, overburden, or sedimentation of a water course.

### **Geophysical Conditions – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

#### **5.a) Seismic Hazards – Fault Rupture**

The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) does not identify the project site as being near any faults. Because no known active or potentially active faults are located within or immediately adjacent to the subject site, potential impacts associated with fault rupture from proposed development would be less than significant.

#### **5.b) Seismic Hazards - Ground shaking or Liquefaction**

The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies the project site as being in an area of moderate liquefaction potential. An Infiltration Test Report prepared by PW Environmental dated June 28, 2011 (included as an attachment to *Exhibit E*) stated that groundwater was encountered at a depth of approximately 19.5 feet in one boring location on the site. The California State Water Resources Control Board *Geotracker* website shows the seasonal high groundwater level estimate to be approximately 15 feet below existing grade. The soils were determined to be silty sand for the first two feet and a combination of clay and sand for a depth of 2 to 9 feet below the project site.

The project is not proposing any structures or habitable space that could be affected by secondary ground failure phenomena such as liquefaction or excessive ground settlement caused by strong ground shaking. Further all development will be subject to the California Building Code which protects against such hazards. Therefore, impacts related to ground shaking and liquefaction would be less than significant.

#### **5.c.) Seismic Hazards - Seiche or Tsunami**

Seiche refers to seismic waves within an enclosed water body such as a lake or reservoir. No enclosed water bodies are located in proximity to the project area. Therefore, there would be no impacts from a seiche.



Also, the City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies the project site as being located inside the tsunami run-up zone. No new structures or habitable space is proposed as part of the project; therefore, impacts from a tsunami would be less than significant.

#### 5.d.) Landslides or mudslides:

The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies the project site as being located in an area that has a low potential for landslides. The project site has an average slope of 2%. Therefore, there would be no impacts related to landslides or mudslides.

#### 5.e.) Subsidence of the Land

According to the City's MEA maps, the project site is not located in an area subject to subsidence; therefore no impacts related to subsidence are anticipated.

#### 5.f.) Geologic or Soil Instability - Expansive Soils

The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies the project site as having expansive soils (high soil shrink-swell potential). The soils were determined to be silty sand for the first two feet and a combination of clay and sand for a depth of 2 to 9 feet below the project site. Because no structures are proposed for the project area, impacts from expansive soils would be less than significant.

#### 5.g) Topography; Grading/ Erosion

The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) identifies the project site as being located in an area of moderate erosion potential; however, the project area is relatively flat with a average slope of 2%. The project involves lowering the grade of the lawn area to be flush with the U-road. Grading is estimated to total 2,500 cubic yards of cut and no fill. The proposed grading would not result in a significant alteration of the natural landform or substantially change the existing topography of the site. Therefore, impacts associated with topography, grading, and erosion on the project site would be less than significant.

#### Geophysical Conditions – Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

#### Geophysical Conditions – Residual Impacts

Less than significant.

| 6. HAZARDS<br>Could the project involve:   | NO | YES<br><i>Level of Significance</i> |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|
| a) A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to: oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation)? |    | Less Than Significant               |
| b) The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazards?  |    | Less Than Significant               |
| c) Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?   | X  |                                     |
| d) Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass, or trees?   |    | Less Than Significant               |

#### Hazards - Discussion

**Issues:** Hazardous materials issues involve the potential for public health or safety impacts from exposure of persons or the environment to hazardous materials or risk of accidents involving combustible or toxic substances.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Significant impacts may result from the following:

- Siting of incompatible projects in close proximity to existing sources of safety risk, such as pipelines, industrial processes, railroads, airports, etc.

- Exposure of project occupants or construction workers to unremediated soil or groundwater contamination.
- Exposure of persons or the environment to hazardous substances due to improper use, storage, or disposal of hazardous materials.
- Siting of development in a high fire hazard areas or beyond adequate emergency response time, with inadequate access or water pressure, or otherwise in a manner that creates a fire hazard

## **Hazards – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

### **6.a) Accidental Explosion or Hazardous Substance Release**

The project area would continue to be used as a public Plaza/park. In January 2004, the City of Santa Barbara adopted a City-wide Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Strategy to help reduce pesticide hazards on City property and promote effective pest management. Park uses are not substantial generators or users of hazardous materials that would have the potential to result in explosions or releases. Also, no hazardous materials would be stored onsite. Therefore, impacts related to risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances would be *less than significant*.

### **6.b) Health Hazard**

Because there are no existing structures onsite, there would be no removal of hazardous materials such as lead paint or asbestos. Any materials used in the maintenance of the public Plaza/park would be regulated by both the State and Federal government and disposal of the material would be done consistent with State and Federal guidelines. Also, park uses would not cause or create a long term health hazard. Therefore, impacts related to creation of health hazards or potential health hazards would be *less than significant*.

During the construction phase there could be relatively small amounts of hazardous materials generated by construction equipment use and maintenance. The emissions associated with construction and operation would be subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to hazardous materials. Also, equipment use, fueling and maintenance would be controlled on site to avoid any contamination entering the City's storm drain system. Other hazards, including air emissions, are discussed in the air quality section. Compliance with existing regulations and recommended mitigations under the Air Quality section would ensure that hazardous material/waste impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels. Therefore, construction related impacts would be *less than significant*.

### **6.c.) Existing Sources of Health Hazards**

A review of the State Water Board Geotracker Database did not reveal any active remediation activities in the project area. There are no known sources of health hazards, such as chemical storage tanks or industrial uses in the project area. Therefore, there would be *no impacts* from existing hazardous materials.

### **6.d) Fire Hazard**

The project site is not located in the City's High Fire Hazard Area. All City emergency services are available to the project site. The Fire Department has determined that emergency access is adequate. The existing fire hydrant would be relocated as approved by the Fire Department. Therefore, impacts associated with fire hazard would be *less than significant*.

## **Hazards - Mitigation**

No mitigation is required.

## **Hazards – Residual Impacts**

Less than significant.

| 7. NOISE                                      | NO | YES<br><i>Level of Significance</i> |
|---|----|-------------------------------------|
| Could the project result in:                  |    |                                     |
| a) Increases in existing noise levels?        |    | Less Than Significant               |
| b) Exposure of people to severe noise levels? |    | Less Than Significant               |

### **Noise - Discussion**

**Issues:** Noise issues are associated with siting of a new noise-sensitive land use in an area subject to high ambient background noise levels, siting of a noise-generating land use next to existing noise-sensitive land uses, and/or short-term construction-related noise.

The primary source of ambient noise in the City is vehicle traffic noise. The City Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) *Noise Contour Map* identifies average ambient noise levels within the City.

Ambient noise levels are determined as averaged 24-hour weighted levels, using the Day-Night Noise Level ( $L_{dn}$ ) or Community Noise Equivalence Level (CNEL) measurement scales. The  $L_{dn}$  averages the varying sound levels occurring over the 24-hour day and gives a 10 decibel penalty to noises occurring between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. to take into account the greater annoyance of intrusive noise levels during nighttime hours. Since  $L_{dn}$  is a 24-hour average noise level, an area could have sporadic loud noise levels above 60 dB(A) which average out over the 24-hour period. CNEL is similar to  $L_{dn}$  but includes a separate 5 dB(A) penalty for noise occurring between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. CNEL and  $L_{dn}$  values usually agree with one another within 1 dB(A). The Equivalent Noise Level ( $L_{eq}$ ) is a single noise level, which, if held constant during the measurement time period, would represent the same total energy as a fluctuating noise.  $L_{eq}$  values are commonly expressed for periods of one hour, but longer or shorter time periods may be specified. In general, a change in noise level of less than three decibels is not audible. A doubling of the distance from a noise source will generally equate to a change in decibel level of six decibels.

Guidance for appropriate long-term background noise levels for various land uses are established in the City General Plan Noise Element Land Use Compatibility Guidelines. Building codes also establish maximum average ambient noise levels for the interiors of structures.

High construction noise levels occur with the use of heavy equipment such as scrapers, rollers, graders, trenchers and large trucks for demolition, grading, and construction. Equipment noise levels can vary substantially through a construction period, and depend on the type of equipment, number of pieces operating, and equipment maintenance. Construction equipment generates noise levels of more than 80 or 90 dB(A) at a distance of 50 feet, and the shorter impulsive noises from other construction equipment (such as pile drivers and drills) can be even higher, up to and exceeding 100 dB(A). Noise during construction is generally intermittent and sporadic, and after completion of the initial demolition, grading and site preparation activities, tends to be quieter.

The Noise Ordinance (Chapter 9.16 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code) governs short-term or periodic noise, such as construction noise, operation of motorized equipment or amplified sound, or other sources of nuisance noise. The ordinance establishes limitations on hours of construction and motorized equipment operations, and provides criteria for defining nuisance noise in general.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** A significant noise impact may result from:

- Siting of a project such that persons would be subject to long-term ambient noise levels in excess of Noise Element land use compatibility guidelines as follows:
  - Neighborhood Parks: Normally acceptable maximum exterior ambient noise level of 65 dB(A).
- Substantial noise from grading and construction activity in close proximity to noise-sensitive receptors for an extensive duration.

### **Noise – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

#### **7.a-b) Increased Noise Level; Exposure to High Noise Levels**

##### **Long-Term Operational Noise:**

The project site is in an area that is subject to average ambient noise level of less than 60 dB(A), as shown on the City's

Master Environmental Assessment noise contour maps. The normally acceptable maximum exterior ambient noise level for neighborhood parks is 65 dB(A); therefore, the noise levels at the project site are below the threshold. The uses on the project site would not change and no substantial noise generation is anticipated to occur as a result of the proposed project. The project site would not be subject to high noise levels nor would the project cause high operational noise levels; therefore, the project's long-term operational noise impacts would be less than significant.

#### Temporary Construction Noise:

The project would result in temporary construction noise due to grading and construction activities. Noise from grading and construction equipment, truck traffic and vibration would affect surrounding areas during the construction period. The total construction period is anticipated to last approximately 4 months. The noise generated grading and construction would be short term, and generally intermittent and sporadic. Therefore, noise impacts from construction would be less than significant.

#### Noise –Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

#### Noise – Residual Impact

Less than significant.

| 8. POPULATION AND HOUSING<br>Could the project:  | NO | YES<br>Level of Significance |
|--|----|------------------------------|
| a) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g. through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)? | X  |                              |
| b) Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?   | X  |                              |

#### Population and Housing - Discussion

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Issues of potentially significant population and housing impacts may involve:

- Growth inducement, such as provision of substantial population or employment growth or creation of substantial housing demand; development in an undeveloped area, or extension/ expansion of major infrastructure that could support additional future growth.
- Loss of a substantial number of housing units, especially loss of more affordable housing.

#### Population and Housing – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts

##### **8.a) Growth-Inducing Impacts**

The project site is in an urbanized area that is currently served by all required infrastructure. The project would not involve an increase in major public facilities such as extension of water or sewer lines or roads that would facilitate other growth in the area. The project would not involve employment growth that would increase population or housing demand. Therefore, there would be no impacts to population growth.

##### **8.b) Housing Displacement**

The project would not involve any housing displacement; therefore, there would be no impacts to housing.

#### Population and Housing - Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

#### Population and Housing – Residual Impact

No impacts.

| <b>9. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>   |  | <b>NO</b> | <b>YES</b><br><i>Level of Significance</i> |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| Could the project have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered services in any of the following areas: |  |           |  |
| a)  | Fire protection?                                   | X         |  |
| b)  | Police protection?                                 | X         |  |
| c)  | Schools?   | X         |  |
| d)  | Maintenance of public facilities, including roads? |           | Less Than Significant                      |
| e)  | Other governmental services?                       | X         |  |
| f)  | Electrical power or natural gas?                   |           | Less Than Significant                      |
| g)  | Water treatment or distribution facilities?        |           | Less Than Significant                      |
| h)  | Sewer or septic tanks?                             |           | Less Than Significant                      |
| i)  | Water distribution/demand?                         |           | Less Than Significant                      |
| j)  | Solid waste disposal?                              |           | Less Than Significant                      |

### **Public Services - Discussion**

**Issues:** This section evaluates project effects on fire and police protection services, schools, road maintenance and other governmental services, utilities, including electric and natural gas, water and sewer service, and solid waste disposal.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** The following may be identified as significant public services and facilities impacts:

- Creation of a substantial need for increased police department, fire department, road maintenance, or government services staff or equipment.
- Generation of substantial numbers of students exceeding public school capacity where schools have been designated as overcrowded.
- Inadequate water, sewage disposal, or utility facilities.
- Substantial increase in solid waste disposal to area sanitary landfills.

### **Public Services – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

**Facilities and Services:** The project site is located in an urban area where all public services are available. In 2010, the City certified a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) on the Plan Santa Barbara General Plan Update. The FEIR concluded that under the projected plan and all studied alternatives, there would be a less than significant impact to all public services.

**Water:** The City of Santa Barbara's water supply comes primarily from the following sources, with the actual share of each determined by availability and level of customer demand: Lake Cachuma and Tecolote Tunnel; Gibraltar Reservoir, Devils Canyon and Mission Tunnel; groundwater; State Water Project Table A allotment; desalination; and recycled water. Conservation and efficiency improvements are projected to contribute to the supply by offsetting demand that would otherwise have to be supplied by additional sources. On June 14, 2011, based on the comprehensive review of the City's water supply, the City Council approved the Long Term Water Supply Program (LTWSP) for the planning period 2011-2030. The LTWSP outlines a strategy to use the above sources to meet the City's estimated system demand (potable plus recycled water) of 14,000 AFY, plus a 10% safety margin equal to 1,400 AFY, for a total water supply target of 15,400 AFY. The LTWSP concludes that the City's water supply is adequate to serve the anticipated demand plus safety margin during the planning period.

**Solid Waste:** Most of the waste generated in the City is transported on a daily basis to seven landfills located around the County. The County of Santa Barbara, which operates the landfills, has developed impact significance thresholds related to the impacts of development on remaining landfill capacity. The County thresholds are based on the projected average solid waste generation for Santa Barbara County from 1990-2005. The County assumes a 1.2% annual increase (approximately 4000 tons per year) in solid waste generation over the 15-year period. The County's threshold for project

specific operational impacts to the solid waste system is 196 tons per year (this figure represents 5% of the expected average annual increase in solid waste generation [4000 tons/year]). Source reduction, recycling, and composting can reduce a project's waste stream by as much as 50%. If a proposed project generates 196 or more tons per year after reduction and recycling efforts, impacts would be considered significant and unavoidable. Proposed projects with a project specific impact as identified above (196 tons/year or more) would also be considered cumulatively significant, as the project specific threshold of significance is based on a cumulative growth scenario. However, as landfill space is already extremely limited, any increase in solid waste of 1% or more of the expected average annual increase in solid waste generation [4000 tons/year], which equates to 40 tons per year, is considered an adverse cumulative impact.

The County of Santa Barbara adopted revised solid waste generation thresholds and guidelines in October 2008. According to the County's thresholds of significance, any construction, demolition or remodeling project of a commercial, industrial or residential development that is projected to create more than 350 tons of construction and demolition debris is considered to have a significant impact on solid waste generation. The County's 350 ton threshold has not been formally adopted by the City; however, it provides a useful method for calculating and analyzing construction waste generated by a project.

#### **9.a) Fire Protection**

The project includes the relocation of the existing fire hydrant and reconfiguration of the U-road but does not change the use in the area. The Fire Department has reviewed the project and determined that fire access and the location of the fire hydrant is adequate. Therefore, there would be no impacts to fire protection.

#### **9.b) Police Protection**

According to the Plan Santa Barbara FEIR, police service is operating at an adequate level. The project does not include a change in use of the project area. Therefore, there would be no impacts to police protection.

#### **9.c) Schools**

The project site is a public Plaza and does not include residential or commercial uses. Therefore, there would be no impacts to schools.

#### **9.d) Maintenance of Public Facilities & Public Road**

The project site is a City owned property that would continue to be maintained by the City. The Parks and Recreation Department would maintain the lawn area, and the Public Works Department would maintain the new concrete sidewalks and U-road. Utility laterals, meter, vaults, etc. would be relocated out of the U-road to the extent feasible in order to minimize the need to dig into the concrete road for maintenance purposes. There are no other public facilities that would be affected by the project. Impacts to public facilities, including roads, would be less than significant.

#### **9.e) Other Government Facilities**

The proposed project would not result in a need for additional City services; therefore, there would be no impacts on other government facilities.

#### **9.f) Electrical power, cable, telephone, or natural gas services**

The project includes upgrading and relocating electrical and natural gas utilities to a new trench along the perimeter of the lawn area. All public services are available to the project site. Therefore, there would be less than significant to these utilities.

#### **9.g & i) Water Treatment Facilities & Water Service**

The project includes relocating the existing water line to a new trench along the perimeter of the lawn area. All public services are available to the project site.

The water use demand for irrigation would be less than the current demand because the amount of lawn area would be reduced by more than 6,000 square feet. In addition, there would be no change to the frequency of events at the Plaza that use water. Therefore, the project would have no impact on the City water supply, treatment, and distribution facilities.

#### **9.h) Sewer**

Properties within the City of Santa Barbara city limits are currently served by the El Estero Treatment Plant and sewer service is available to the project site. The maximum capacity of the El Estero Treatment Plant is 11 million gallons per day (MGD), with current average daily flow of 8.5 MGD. The Treatment Plant is designed to treat the wastewater from a population of 104,000, which is more than the City's current population. The project includes relocating the existing

sewer line to a new trench along the perimeter of the lawn area. There would be no change in use for the Plaza and no increase in sewage treatment is expected. Therefore, there would be no impacts to sewer facilities.

#### **9.j) Solid Waste Generation/ Disposal**

Long-Term (Operational). There would be no change in use for the Plaza, and no increase in solid waste generation is expected. Therefore, the impacts to solid waste generation and disposal would be less than significant.

Short-Term (Demolition & Construction). The project site does not contain any structures that would be demolished; however, the lawn area would be lowered to be flush with the grade of the U-road. The existing road and sidewalks would be demolished and replaced generating some demolition debris. Grading for the project is approximately 2,500 cubic yards of cut and no fill. The solid waste generation/disposal thresholds adopted by the City do not apply to short-term construction projects. However, new construction, especially remodeling and demolition, represents the greatest challenge to maintaining existing landfill diversion rates. The County of Santa Barbara has developed solid waste generation guidelines. Under the County's significance thresholds, any project that is projected to create more than 350 tons of construction and demolition debris is considered to have a significant impact on solid waste generation. Given that the proposed project does not include the demolition of structures, the construction debris would be well below the 350 ton threshold. Therefore, the short term solid waste demolition impacts would be considered less than significant. Application of City requirements (SBMC Ch. 7.18) for construction waste recycling will minimize any impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

#### **Public Services –Mitigation**

No mitigation is required.

#### **Public Services – Residual Impacts**

Less than significant.

| <b>10. RECREATION</b> |  | <b>NO</b> | <b>YES</b>                   |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|------------------------------|
| Could the project:    |  |           | <i>Level of Significance</i> |
| a)                    | Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities? | X         |                              |
| b)                    | Affect existing parks or other public recreational facilities?                           |           | Less Than Significant        |

#### **Recreation - Discussion**

**Issues:** Recreational issues are associated with increased demand for recreational facilities, or loss or impacts to existing recreational facilities.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** Recreation impacts may be significant if they result in:

- Substantial increase in demand for park and recreation facilities in an area under-served by existing public park and recreation facilities.
- Substantial loss or interference with existing park space or other public recreational facilities such as hiking, cycling, or horse trails.

#### **Recreation – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

Currently within the City, there are more than 1,800 acres of natural open space, park land and other recreational facilities. In addition, there are 28 tennis courts, 2 public outdoor swimming pools, beach volleyball courts, sport fields, lawn bowling greens, a golf course, 13 community buildings and a major skateboard facility. The City also offers a wide variety of recreational programs for people of all ages and abilities in sports, various classes, tennis, aquatics and cultural arts. In 2005, the City prepared a General Plan Update: 2030 Condition, Trends, and Issues (CTI) Report (September 2005) that examined existing conditions associated with recreation and parks. Population characteristics including income, age, population growth, education and ethnicity affect recreation interests and participation levels. Additionally, the National Recreation and Park Association has established park service area standards for various types of parks. The NRPA standards have not been adopted by the City; however, the standards do provide a useful tool for assessing park

space needs. The CTI Report determined that, based on NRPA standards, there is an uneven distribution of parkland in the City, such that some areas of the City, not including the project area, may currently be underserved with neighborhood and community parks, but overall the City has adequate passive, community, beach, regional, open space, and sports facility parks.

#### 10.a) Recreational Demand

The project is an infrastructure improvement plan for Plaza de la Guerra, a City park. The project would result in improvements to the park; however, the uses for the Plaza would not change. Demand for additional park and recreation facilities is not expected to increase; therefore, there would be no impact on recreational demand.

#### 10.b) Existing Recreational Facilities

The Plaza includes an existing City park, which would be improved as part of the project. The project would not impact or interfere with other parks or public trails. Therefore, the impacts to existing recreational facilities would be less than significant.

#### Recreation – Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

#### Recreation – Residual Impacts

Less than significant.

| 11. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION<br>Could the project result in:  | NO | YES<br><i>Level of Significance</i>                      |
|---|----|--|
| a) Increased vehicle trips?   |    | Less Than Significant                                    |
| b) Hazards to safety from design features (e.g. sharp curves, inadequate sight distance or dangerous intersections)?  |    | Less Than Significant (to be examined further in an EIR) |
| c) Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?  |    | Less Than Significant                                    |
| d) Decreased performance or safety of pedestrian, bicycle, or public transit facilities?  |    | Less Than Significant (to be examined further in an EIR) |
| e) Conflicts with adopted policies, plans, programs, or ordinances regarding congestion management and the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation. |    | Less Than Significant (to be examined further in an EIR) |

#### Transportation - Discussion

**Issues:** Transportation issues include traffic, access, circulation and safety. Vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian, and transit modes of transportation are all considered, as well as emergency vehicle access. The City General Plan Circulation Element contains policies addressing circulation, traffic, and parking in the City.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** A proposed project may have a significant impact on traffic/ circulation/ parking if it would:

##### Vehicle Traffic

- Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and street system capacity (see traffic thresholds below).
- Cause insufficiency in the transit system.
- Conflict with the Congestion Management Plan (CMP) or Circulation Element or other adopted plan or policy pertaining to vehicle or transit systems.



## Circulation and Traffic Safety

- Create potential hazards due to addition of traffic to a roadway that has design features (e.g., narrow width, roadside ditches, sharp curves, poor sight distance, inadequate pavement structure) or that supports uses that would be incompatible with substantial increases in traffic.
- Diminish or reduce safe pedestrian, bicycle, or public transit circulation.
- Result in inadequate emergency access on-site or to nearby uses.
- Conflict with regional and local plans, policies, or ordinances regarding the circulation system, including all modes of transportation (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation).

**Traffic Thresholds of Significance:** The City uses Levels of Service (LOS) “A” through “F” to describe operating conditions at signalized intersections in terms of volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios, with LOS A (0.50-0.60 V/C) representing free flowing conditions and LOS F (0.90+ V/C) describing conditions of substantial delay. The City General Plan Circulation Element establishes the goal for City intersections to not exceed LOS C (0.70-0.80 V/C).

For purposes of environmental assessment, LOS C at 0.77 V/C is the threshold Level of Service against which impacts are measured. An intersection is considered “impacted” if the volume to capacity ratio is .77 V/C or greater.

Project-Specific Significant Impact: A project-specific significant impact results when:

- (a) Project peak-hour traffic would cause a signalized intersection to exceed 0.77 V/C, or
- (b) The V/C of an intersection already exceeding 0.77 V/C would be increased by 0.01 (1%) or more as a result of project peak-hour traffic.

For non-signalized intersections, delay-time methodology is utilized in evaluating impacts.

Significant Cumulative Contribution: A project would result in a significant contribution to cumulative traffic impacts when:

- (a) Project peak-hour traffic together with other cumulative traffic from existing and reasonably foreseeable pending projects would cause an intersection to exceed 0.77 V/C, or
- (b) Project would contribute traffic to an intersection already exceeding 0.77 V/C.

## Transportation – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts

### **11.a) Traffic**

Long-Term Traffic: The use of the Plaza would not change. The project would not result in an increase in traffic; therefore, impacts to long-term traffic would be less than significant.

Short-Term Construction Traffic: The project would generate construction-related traffic that would occur over a four month period. Staging, equipment, materials storage, and temporary construction worker parking would occur on the project site. Temporary construction traffic is generally considered an adverse but not significant impact. In this case, given the relatively short duration of the construction process, short-term construction-related traffic impacts would be a less than significant.

### **11.b) Hazards to safety from design features**

The proposed project includes the resurfacing of the U-road which is not a public street, but rather a road within the Plaza. After the grade of the lawn area is lowered to be flush with the U-road, the project would incorporate traffic-pedestrian safety features such as bollards and truncated domes to separate the lawn area from the road. Also, the reconfiguration of the parking spaces would not result in safety hazards in the project area. Therefore, impacts related to safety would be less than significant. However, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and parking/circulation at the Plaza, the applicant has requested that the project’s impacts on circulation be further evaluated in an EIR.

### **11.c) Emergency Access**

The project includes the removal of two parking spaces located next to the lawn area across from City Hall in order to improve the width of the road for emergency vehicle access. The proposed improvements to the Plaza have been reviewed by both the Public Works and Fire Departments and both departments found the design adequate for emergency access. Therefore, impacts for emergency access would be less than significant.

#### 11.d) Bicycle /Pedestrian/Public Transit

New bicycle posts would replace the existing bicycle posts currently located on the site. The project would not result in the need for new bike lanes. Therefore, impacts related to bicycle use would be less than significant.

The project includes the replacement of the sidewalk on the western side of the Plaza, and an addition to the sidewalk of approximately 4.5 feet to create a minimum 9 foot wide sidewalk. One new crosswalk would be provided across De la Guerra Street near the U-road entry and two new crosswalks would be provided near the south end of the U-road. With the upgrading of the sidewalks and crosswalks, impacts to pedestrian hazards would be less than significant.

There are no bus stops within the immediate vicinity that would be affected by the project, either by needing to move an existing bus stop or affecting the line of sight of the bus driver. Therefore, impacts to transit services would be less than significant.

However, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and parking/circulation at the Plaza, the applicant has requested that the project's impacts on circulation in all its forms be further evaluated in an EIR.

#### 11.e) Congestion Management and Circulation

The project site would have direct access from a public street, and would not conflict with or impede implementation of any policies, plans, programs, or ordinances regarding congestion management and the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation. The net loss of four (4) parking spaces and the reconfiguration of parking spaces in the project area would not significantly affect circulation or conflict with any policies of the General Plan Circulation Element. Therefore, impacts related to congestion management or the circulation system would be less than significant. However, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and parking/circulation at the plaza, the applicant has requested that the project's impacts on circulation be further evaluated in an EIR.

#### Transportation – Recommended Mitigation

No mitigation is required.

#### Transportation – Residual Impact

Less than significant. However, given the ongoing discussion concerning the design and parking/circulation at the Plaza, the applicant has requested that the project's impacts on circulation be further evaluated in an EIR.

| 12. WATER ENVIRONMENT        |   | NO | YES                          |
|------------------------------|---|----|------------------------------|
| Could the project result in: |   |    | <i>Level of Significance</i> |
| a)                           | Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff? |    | Less Than Significant        |
| b)                           | Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?                 |    | Less Than Significant        |
| c)                           | Discharge into surface waters?  |    | Less Than Significant        |
| d)                           | Change in the quantity, quality, direction or rate of flow of ground waters?              |    | Less Than Significant        |
| e)                           | Increased storm water drainage?   |    | Less Than Significant        |

#### Water – Discussion

**Issues:** Water resources issues include changes in offsite drainage and infiltration/groundwater recharge; storm water runoff and flooding; and water quality.

**Impact Evaluation Guidelines:** A significant impact would result from:

#### Water Resources and Drainage

- Substantially changing the amount of surface water in any water body or the quantity of groundwater recharge.

- Substantially changing the drainage pattern or creating a substantially increased amount or rate of surface water runoff that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned drainage and storm water systems.

#### Flooding

- Locating development within 100-year flood hazard areas; substantially altering the course or flow of flood waters or otherwise exposing people or property to substantial flood hazard

#### Water Quality

- Substantial discharge of sediment or pollutants into surface water or groundwater, or otherwise degrading water quality, including temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity.

### **Water Resources – Existing Conditions and Project Impacts**

The City of Santa Barbara began implementing the Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) in January of 2009. The purpose of the SWMP is to implement and enforce a program designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the “maximum extent practicable” (MEP) to protect water quality. The SWMP addresses discharge of pollutants both during construction and after construction. The main goals of the SWMP as it applies to this project are to retain and treat the 1-inch, 24-hr storm; the peak runoff discharge rate shall not exceed the predevelopment rate up to the 25 year storm; and to retain on site the volume difference between pre and post conditions for the 25-yr, 24-hr storm or the 1” storm (whichever is larger).

#### **12.a) Drainage**

A Drainage and Water Quality Report prepared by Penfield & Smith dated July 14, 2011 (see *Exhibit E - Drainage and Water Quality Report*) is incorporated herein and summarized below. The report evaluated the current site conditions and the proposed project impacts. The report concluded that the site design meets the SWMP peak flow rate reduction requirements by reducing post-project peak flow rates to less than or equal to the pre-project peak flow rates. This would be accomplished through the use of vegetated swales. Therefore, impacts related to drainage would be less than significant.

An overland escape area for storm water from the Plaza is currently almost non-existent and the potential exists for flooding portions of the Santa Barbara News-Press building during large, infrequent storms. This would improve slightly with the proposed project. The most likely route for overland escape is a small walkway located on the adjacent property owned by the Santa Barbara News-Press. The report includes a recommendation that the City explore a cooperative effort to improve overland escape conditions by lowering the walkway, which would directly benefit the Santa Barbara News-Press property.

#### **12.b) Flooding**

The project site is located inside the Tsunami run-up zone and in an area determined to be outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

The City, as required by state and federal regulation, has a response and recovery plan to address disasters such as tsunamis. In June 2009, Council authorized the Fire Department’s Office of Emergency Services, to take efforts that would result in the designation of the City of Santa Barbara as a Tsunami Ready Community. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through the National Weather Service, has developed standards and guidelines aimed at helping coastal communities be better prepared for the impact of tsunamis through focused planning, education and awareness efforts. In August of 2009, the City attained the designation of Storm Ready, one of 13 communities in California to do so. Additional work to attain tsunami ready designation has continued, with the recent delivery of signs designating evacuation routes, and concurrent community outreach and education. Final approval of the City's Tsunami Ready application by the National Weather Service is anticipated by the end of 2011. As a result of this effort, impacts related to tsunamis would be less than significant.

The project area is outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains and there are no risks to life as a result of the project. Therefore, impacts related to flooding would be less than significant.

#### **12.c) Discharge into surface waters**

Runoff from the project site would not directly enter any natural drainage courses. Therefore, impacts to surface waters would be less than significant.

During construction, the lawn area would be lowered to be flush with the U-road. With the implementation of standard erosion control measures, impacts to surface waters during construction would be less than significant.

#### **12.d) Change in ground waters**

The proposed site design meets the storm water quality treatment requirements of the City's SWMP with the storm water flowing through a vegetated swale filter, vegetated filter strip or an infiltration trench as shown on the drainage plan. Therefore, impacts to ground water would be less than significant.

#### **12.e) Increase storm water**

The proposed design meets the volume reduction requirement of the City's SWMP by retaining onsite the 1 inch, 24-hour storm volume through the use of vegetated swales. Therefore, impacts related to storm water would be less than significant.

#### **Water Resources – Mitigation**

No mitigation is required.

#### **Water Resources – Residual Impact**

Less than significant.

| <b>13. LAND USE AND PLANNING</b> |  | <b>YES</b>           | <b>NO</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------|
| Would the project:               |  |                      |           |
| a)                               | Physically divide an established community?  |                      | X         |
| b)                               | Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | Unknown at this time |           |

#### **Land Use and Planning – Discussion**

**13.a)** The project does not involve a cross-town freeway, storm channel, utility transmission lines or any other improvements that have the potential to physically divide the community. The project would not close any existing bridges or roadways. The project will not create any physical barriers that will divide the community.

**13.b)** While completing each section of this Initial Study, an analysis was undertaken of the potential conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purposes of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect (a complete list of said plans, policies, and regulation is available at the City Planning Division). Based on this analysis, it was determined that additional information is needed in order to determine consistency with land use policies in regard to Cultural Resources and will be further evaluated in an EIR.

Mitigation measure BIO-1 and BIO-2 are required to ensure that impacts to the Historic California pepper tree are minimized and that the project is consistent with the applicable policies of the City's Conservation Element.

#### **Land Use and Planning – Required Mitigation**

See BIO-1 and BIO-2.

#### **Land Use and Planning – Recommended Mitigation**

See AQ-1 through AQ-18.

#### **Land Use and Planning – Residual Impacts**

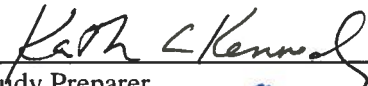
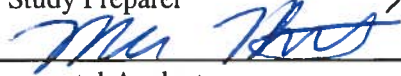
Unknown. Will be further evaluated in an EIR.

| <b>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.</b> |   | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> |
|--|---|------------|-----------|
| a)   | Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | Yes        |           |
| b)   | Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?   | Yes        |           |
| c)   | Does the project have potential impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?   | Yes        |           |
| d)   | Does the project have potential environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?   |            | X         |

- a) As discussed in Section 4 (Cultural Resources), additional information is needed to evaluate impacts to archaeological resources. This issue will be further evaluated in an EIR.
- b) This will be evaluated in an EIR.
- c) As stated above, impacts to archaeological resources will be further evaluated in an EIR. Also, the applicant has requested that an analysis of the project's cumulative impacts on historic resources and circulation be included in the EIR.
- d) As discussed in Sections 1 through 12 of this Initial Study, no significant effects on humans (direct or indirect) would occur as a result of this project as mitigated.

### **INITIAL STUDY CONCLUSION**

On the basis of this initial evaluation it has been determined that proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, and further study in an Environmental Impact Report is required.

|   |         |
|---|---------|
|  | 8/25/11 |
| Initial Study Preparer  | Date    |
|  | 8/25/11 |
| Environmental Analyst   | Date    |

### **EXHIBITS:**

- A. Project Plans
- B. SB County GHG Emissions Standards, June 10, 2010
- C. Tree Assessment, Timothy Downey, City Urban Forest Superintendent, April 2010
- D. Historic Structures/Sites Report and Cultural Landscape Report, Post/Hazeltine Associates, August 2, 2011
- E. Drainage and Water Quality Report, Penfield & Smith, July 14, 2011

### **LIST OF SOURCES USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS INITIAL STUDY**

The following sources used in the preparation of this Initial Study are located at the Community Development Department, Planning Division, 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara and are available for review upon request.

Phase I Archaeological Resources Report, Applied Earthworks, July 2011

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) & CEQA Guidelines

General Plan Circulation Element

General Plan Conservation Element

2004 Housing Element

General Plan Land Use Element

General Plan Noise Element w/appendices

General Plan Map

General Plan Seismic Safety/Safety Element

Geology Assessment for the City of Santa Barbara

Institute of Traffic Engineers Parking Generation Manual

Institute of Traffic Engineers Trip Generation Manual

Local Coastal Plan (*Main or Airport*)

Master Environmental Assessment

Master Environmental Assessment Maps (2008)

Parking Design Standards

Santa Barbara Municipal Code & City Charter

Special District Map

Uniform Building Code as adopted by City

Zoning Ordinance & Zoning Map